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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 7201

FOR AF/P

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, XA
SUBJECT: AF CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 8-13, 1978

REF: STATE 189821

1. RATHER THAN SUGGESTING AGENDA TOPICS FOR THE AF CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, WE WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE A FRAMEWORK -- U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA AND WHAT KIND OF U.S. POLICY IS BEST ABLE TO PROTECT THEM. WE ARE CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING THE U.S. STAKE IN AFRICA BY THE VERY DIFFICULTY OF DOING SO. HOUPHOUET, IN HIS PERIODIC DISQUISITIONS ON AFRICAN RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, OFTEN MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON AFRICAN RAW MATERIALS AND THE RELATIVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE UNITED STATES. HE INFERS FROM THIS THAT AFRICA'S IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES IS INDIRECT -- THROUGH EUROPE. HE CONCLUDES THAT MODERATE AFRICAN STATES WILL FOR THIS REASON HAVE TO LOOK IN THE FIRST INTANCE FOR SUPPORT FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN POWERS IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO RESIST SOVIET/CUBAN INFLUENCE.

2. HOUPHOUET'S ANALYSIS IS LESS THAN CONVINCING, PARTLY BECAUSE IT UNDERESTIMATES THE VALUE OF THE U.S. ECONOMIC
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STAKE IN AFRICA, AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT DEFINES AFRICA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD WHOLLY IN ECONOMIC TERMS. IT IS HOWEVER A USEFUL REMINDER THAT PROGRESSIVE AFRICAN LEADERS ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO ARE PUZZLED BY AMERICAN PRIORITIES IN AFRICA.

3. THE DEFINITION OF U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA SEEMS

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TO US THEREFORE NOT ONLY THE PROPER POINT OF DEPARTURE
FOR THE CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, BUT ALSO THE
LOGICAL DESTINATION. AND BY U.S. INTERESTS WE DO NOT
MEAN ONLY ECONOMIC OR MILITARY INTERESTS, AS TRADITIONALLY
DEFINED BY GLOBAL STRATEGISTS. THESE CERTAINLY NEED TO
BE IDENTIFIED, BUT SINCE U.S. INVESTMENT, FOR EXAMPLE,
IS SPREAD WIDELY AMONG FRICAN PROGRESSIVE AS WELL AS
AFRICAN MODERATE STATES, THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY
WILL BE AMBIGUOUS. ONLY BY TAKING A BROADER VIEW OF U.S.
RELATIONS WITH AFRICA -- A VIEW WHICH EMBODIES INTANGIBLE
AS WELL AS TANGIBLE FACTORS -- WILL WE HAVE ANY HOPE
OF MAKING REALISTIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMERICAN
POLICY IN AFRICA.

4. THIS KIND OF INTELLECTUAL APPROACH TO THE CONFERENCE
WOULD NOT PERHAPS ENCOURAGE US TO DISCUSS CUBAN AND SOVIET
INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA "FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT" (AS REFTEL
SUGGESTS), BUT WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO
AVOID COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF CUBAN AND
SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA FROM THE AMERICAN VIEWPOINT.
IT WOULD ALSO LEAD LOGICALLY TO A DISCUSSION OF EUROPEAN
POLICY TOWARD AFRICA AND THE AREAS WHERE BRITISH AND FRENCH
ACTION REINFORCES OR DETRACTS FROM OUR ABILITY TO REACH
STATED U.S. OBJECTIVES.
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